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EDITORIAL

No one who heard Miss Hall's enthusiastic and suggestive address on school libraries at the last meeting of the National

**The Library
in the School**

Council could escape the conviction that this is an important adjunct of the work for which the Council stands. It must have come home to many of us, also, that as public servants the librarians are often more awake to their opportunities and duties than teachers are. From their orderliness, their ready control of their resources, and their spirit of service, we teachers have much to learn. Miss Hall's forthcoming report on the subject will have many valuable and detailed suggestions for us all.

Two types of library service and library facility are now in existence for the special use of the schools. There is, first, the children's reading-room in the general library; and, secondly, the separate library—either a loan from the general library of the town, or the property of the school—housed in the school building. In favor of the former plan are economy of books and space, and the greater probability that the room will be comfortable and beautiful. In favor of the second plan is the greater accessibility, the proximity, of the books. Immediacy of contact with the books we have resolved to look into is an important factor in our intellectual life. We all know how soon an impulse to look up a bit of information, to read a story or an essay, grows cold, if there intervenes some delay. It is this common weakness that is met by having the library in the school building.

We shall not all learn to "live with" books, any more than we shall all live by them. But that this sense of the usability of books, of friendly intercourse with them, of their frequent availability as interesting companions should be fostered in school, no one will doubt. How shall we cultivate this feeling? Books a mile away, guarded by precise officials, and to be had only upon the performance of certain formal ceremonies of recording, may not seem too

remote to an eager reader. But the boy or girl who is not "bookish" may well find other calls upon his leisure easier and more attractive.

The ideal school library is near at hand. It is a light and sunny room, free from glare. It is comfortable, with easy divans and chairs built in conformity to the lines of the human figure. It is above all things, quiet; and, if possible, large enough to contain remote and inviting corners. Its walls and all its decorative scheme are in harmony with its purpose, subdued yet cheerful in tone. Its pictures are interesting and pleasing—good art, but not too classical for its visitors. It contains books on a wide range of subjects: science, history, literature, and those studies of our social life, economic and political, in which we expect thoughtful young people to take an interest. It contains many editions of books selected for their beauty, in binding, printing, and illustration. Such treasures as Maxfield Parrish's illustrated edition of the *Arabian Nights* and Jessie Wilcox Smith's *A Child's Garden of Verse* should be there, not locked in glass cases, but lying temptingly on the tables. Indeed, the library should be, before all else, a room filled with temptations. It should be so full of seductions that a boy sent to it for a piece of information would be likely to waste time there—even, perhaps, to forget what he was sent there for. It should be a land of still waters and green pastures, with a soft-voiced, intelligent, and tactful librarian as its good shepherd.

Casting a critical eye over the report of the Committee on the Preparation of High-School Teachers of English in the May number of the *English Journal*, the editor is compelled to say in all frankness that it is more interesting for what it suggests than for what it reveals. The truth is that statistics of educational matters, no matter how intelligently compiled, give but a dusty answer to one who is hot for certainties in this our teaching life. How shall a young man or woman make preparation for a teacher's career? By taking courses in ethnology and Etruscan, say the statistics; but who knows whether courses in astrophysics and agronomy (one of the questioned actually proposes poultry husbandry) would not have been still better? And

**Statistics
and
Comments**

was it ethnology and Etruscan, after all, that did the business? Most teachers have difficulty in answering such a question as this point-blank. Even the present writer, endowed though he be by virtue of his editorial office with all human wisdom, finds it hard to say. His own small successes seem to him to have been in part imitations of his favorite teachers, in part the result of reflection upon his own difficulties in the schools, in part the instinctive application of plain common-sense. "Courses" played a minor rôle. Indeed, generally speaking, they were negligible except where they brought him into contact with stimulating minds in the classroom or the library.

It is in the comments that one finds the interesting and significant features of the report, and one wishes that there were more of them. True, they contradict one another furiously, but that does not greatly matter. They are a challenge and a stimulus. They compel every teacher who reads them to ask himself seriously what he really thinks about these matters.

Let us have more statistics, by all means. They are indispensable to the rational study of every educational problem. But let us also have more comments, and it will do no harm if they now and then take the useful form of articles for the *English Journal*.